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FEDERAL STAMPS AND LABELS ON MEATS

Meats may carry three major types of stamps: License, inspection, and grade. Learn to look for these stamps and know what they mean. Consumers may see only two types of stamps on any one wholesale cut. They are the license number of the slaughterer and the grade designation of the meat or the Federal meat inspection stamp and the Federal grade stamp.

The license stamp (on wholesale cuts only) is the permit of the slaughterer. It offers proof that he is registered and is complying with the Government's program to route the flow of meats into civilian and military channels. This stamp is found only on locally slaughtered meats, NOT under Federal inspection.

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This stamp on both wholesale and retail cuts of fresh and cured meats (including sausages) shows that the meat was Federally inspected and passed as wholesome food. The number on the stamp is assigned by the Government to the packing house where Federal inspection is maintained. The imprint on the meat appears in purple ink, which is harmless.



This printed label on canned and packaged meat products (wholesale and retail) shows that the contents were Federally inspected and passed as wholesome food. The establishment number may be omitted from the label if the number is embossed on a metal container.

Following are the four principal Federal grade stamps placed on wholesale and retail cuts or carcasses of fresh beef:

U.S.
CHOICE

CHOICE (or AA) is the highest quality of beef. The lean is well marbled with fat - excellent for steaks, roasts, and other fine cuts.

U.S.
GOOD

GOOD (or A) is second highest quality of beef. Although its fat content is lower than that of CHOICE, it is satisfactory for any purpose.

U.S.
COMRCL

COMMERCIAL (or B) is third quality of beef. Not so much in demand for broiling or oven roasting as the higher grades, but satisfactory for cooking in moist heat, such as pot roasting and stewing.

U.S.
UTILITY

UTILITY (or C) is the fourth grade of beef. It is satisfactory for pot roasting, stewing, and other economical uses.

NOTE: All meat except pork is required to be Federally graded wherever possible. When the Federal grading service is not available the slaughterer is granted permission to grade his own meats, using alphabetical symbols to compare with Government grade designations as follows: "AA" for "Choice," "A" for "Good," "B" for "Commercial," and "C" for "Utility." Pork is not graded, mainly because it is of a more uniform quality than other meats. Grade names of veal, lamb, and mutton for the four principal grades are the same as for beef - Choice, Good, Commercial, and Utility. The corresponding alphabetical symbols are also the same for veal and lamb, but for mutton they are: "S" for both "Choice" and "Good," "M" for "Commercial," and "R" for "Utility."

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